

JUNE 10, 2021

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**\*\*\*STATEMENT\*\*\***

**END OF SESSION STATEMENT BY TEANA TAYLOR  
OF THE PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN FOR PAROLE JUSTICE**

**(New York)** — Today, the New York State Legislature is set to close its 2021 session without taking any action to address the crisis of aging, sickness, and death in prison or the scourge of racially-biased parole release denials. Specifically, they failed to pass the widely-popular Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills. **In response, TeAna Taylor of the People's Campaign for Parole Justice and the daughter of an incarcerated New Yorker said:**

“Our lawmakers cannot pretend they don't know about the humanitarian crisis of aging, death and despair behind bars – a crisis that devastates generations of mostly Black and Latinx families across New York State, including my own. Lawmakers know that people who have totally transformed themselves after years and decades of incarceration – people who should be home with their families and providing mentorship to young people – have no hope of release because of an unfair and racist system. Lawmakers know that the Parole Board is far more likely to deny release to Black and Latinx people than their white counterparts. With their failure to pass the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills, lawmakers are condemning many more to die in prison, sustaining systemic racism, and denying people the possibility of redemption. They are playing the role of spectators at a mass lynching. We demand they reconvene and pass these bills immediately to give our friends and loved ones hope. We will keep fighting until they do what is morally right.”

**Background:**

- Dr. Hazel Dukes and the NAACP New York State Conference of Branches [announced their support](#) for the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills, joining a broad coalition of Members of Congress like [Rep. Jamaal Bowman](#), [Rep. Adriano Espaillat](#), [Rep. Jerry Nadler](#), and unions like 1199 SEIU, the Working Families Party, and celebrities such as [Chelsea Clinton](#).
- The Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills are supported by more than 300 organizations across New York State, including some of the largest crime victims and survivor advocacy groups due to [the connections between parole justice and justice for victims and survivors of crime](#): The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Crime Victims Treatment Center, The Working Families Party, 1199 SEIU, CWA District 1, VOCAL-NY, Citizen Action, New Hour for Women and Children, LiveOn NY, JASA, the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, NY Communities for Change, Center for Community Alternatives, Osborne Association, NYCLU, [FWD.us](#), the #HALTsolitary Campaign, Legal Aid Society, Center for Justice at Columbia, and NYU Law's Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law.

- There is a crisis of aging and dying for New Yorkers in prison and their families because of decades of extreme sentencing and blanket denials of parole release by a racially biased Parole Board.
- 55% of the roughly 30,000 people currently incarcerated in New York State prisons are Black people, despite the fact that only 18% of the overall population in the state is Black. 77% are People of Color.
- According to a [Times Union analysis](#) of the nearly 19,000 parole board decisions over the last two years, racial bias infects parole release determinations and disparities have only widened in recent years. The data, which spans October 2018 through October 2020, shows the Parole Board granted parole release to 41 percent of white people, compared to 34 percent of Black people and 33 percent of Latinx people.
- Nearly 1-in-4 (24%) people in New York State prisons are serving life or virtual life sentences.
- 4,704 people in prison are defined by NYS DOCCS as older adults, meaning they are 55 or older.
- Without reforms to expand access to parole release and make the process more fair in New York State, New Yorkers, especially those who are Black and Latinx, will continue to age without dignity, get sick, and die in prison regardless of their transformation and potential benefits to the outside community.
- The People’s Campaign for Parole Justice is calling on lawmakers in Albany to pass two bills that, together, will ensure that people in prison have meaningful opportunities for individualized consideration for parole release based on who they are today, what they have done to change, and whether they pose a risk if released:
- [Elder Parole \(S.15A/A.3475A\)](#) would allow the State Board of Parole to conduct an evaluation for potential parole release to incarcerated people aged 55 and older who have already served 15 or more years, including some of the state’s oldest and sickest incarcerated people.
- [Fair and Timely Parole \(S.1415A/A.4231A\)](#) would provide more meaningful parole reviews for incarcerated people who are already parole eligible.

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